

## [After some inquiry we located]

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After some inquiry we located “Ye oldest inhabitant,” who turned out to be an ancient shrimper and fisherman, named Paul [Bigel?]. We found him in his shack located about half way between Old St. Joe and New St. Joe. He was engaged in repairing his nets, and upon introducing ourselves and telling him that we had come to him for some information as to the past of the vicinity, he became very friendly and talkative.

He told us that he was born in St. Joe in September, 1839; and was, consequently, in his 84th year. Beyond the fact that his face was a mass of wrinkles and that he had only, apparently, two teeth left, he showed little signs of his advanced age, being about five [foot?] and eleven inches in height, thin, but strong and active, and weighing about one hundred and fifty pounds. My attention was at once attracted to a most singular and prominent birthmark. It was of a vivid scarlet [hue?], triangular in shape, and located on his neck about half an inch below the lobe of his left ear, the mark being nearly an inch in size. His varying moods seemed to have no effect on its color, it remaining at all times a bright scarlet.

Upon my alluding diplomatically to this mark, he told me that the first male child in each generation of his family, beginning with his grandfather and on down to his own great-grandson, had borne this mark, each exactly alike and appearing only on the oldest son of each generation. This unvarying birthmark appearing regularly from generation to generation was the foundation of his belief in heredity, of which more [?].

He told us that his paternal grandfather, also named Paul [Bigot?], was one of the “merrie company” who sailed with [Jean Lafitte?] 5 in his voyagings back and forth on the Spanish Main, engaged in the honorable pursuit of relieving Spanish ships, and others, too, of their surplus riches, and almost as frequently their lives. Indeed, his grandfather must have

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stood high in the good graces of that celebrated pirate and gentleman of fortune, [Jean Lafitte?]. His tale confirms that part of American history which says that [Lafitte?] and about one hundred members of his crew were given a full pardon by the United States government after their brave and successful serving of General Jackson's great guns at the Battle of New Orleans, this being an instance where skill required for [?] purposes was put to a good and patriotic use.

Some of [Lafitte's?] men [availed?] of this amnesty and lived and died honest men. Some others, including their leader, returned to their old ways and met various fates. Among the former was Paul Bigot II, who, after wandering around in the [harrataria?] section of Louisiana for a while finally settled at St. Joseph, earning a [?] livelihood in fishing and perhaps other just as honorable ways. Grandfather Bigot married a young girl of St. Joe in 1815. One son, the father of my historian, was born, of this union in 1817, and this son was consequently twenty-one years of age at the time of the Constitutional Convention in St. Joe in [1839?].

It appeared in the course of our conversation with old Paul that he was an [?] believer in heredity, and he cited his own family history in support of his belief. [?] [my?] attempt to give his language, interspersed with characteristic shrugs and 6 grimaces, his story was as follows, and, as he evidently believed it implicitly, you can understand his belief in the law of heredity:

In the year 1791 there lived in the province of [Brittany?], in France, an ancient and long-descended family named [De Arngaae?]. At this time the family consisted only of the [Count?], a young man about twenty-five years of age; his wife, who was about the same age, and one child, a little boy of three years. [?] [?] was naturally a Royalist in politics and, in addition to this, was unusually bitter and outspoken against the Revolution, its practices and objects. Hitherto he had enjoyed immunity from the harsher methods of the Revolutionists, mainly by reason of his comparative insignificance and the [remoteness?] of his residence from Paris.

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Unfortunately in the summer of 1791 he become possessed of the idea that his duty to the [?] cause made it necessary for him to make a trip to Paris. His devoted wife absolutely refused to be left at home and arranged to accompany him, despite his better judgment to the contrary. The [confidential?] servant and general [?] of the Count was Paul Bigot, the great-grandfather of our historian, the old fisherman of St. Joe. This Bigot was shrewd, unscrupulous man of about the Count's own age. [?] on the [De?] [Aragnae?] estate, his forbears had been servants of the [De Aragnae?] family for generations and with a long record of faithful devotion to the family interests.

However, this unworthy descendent of the Bigot family, no doubt influenced by the mad ideas of liberty and equality and selfseeking, coming from the Revolution, this particular Bigot had long 7 resolved to avail of the first opportunity to advance his fortune regardless of obstacles. He, therefore, hailed the trip to Paris as likely to give him the chance and urged his master, who needed little urging, the desirability of the trip.

When the [De Aragnae?] family started on their trip to Paris the party consisted of the Count and his family and Bigot and his wife, a young girl of about twenty years of age. [?] insisted on going with Bigot, although at the time expecting to become a mother at an early date. The party reached Paris in July, 1791, after encountering rather less than the usual obstacles [attendant?] upon [? ?] in those rough days. Having settled his family with an [? ?] friend in the [? ? ?], the Count [?] about his business, exercising all due precaution to prevent attracting the [?] of the Revolutionary government.

Now it appears that Bigot's wife was devotedly attached to her [mistress?], and especially the little boy. She arrived in Paris filled with gloomy [forebodings?] and in a highly nervous state, perhaps owing partly to her physical condition. Bigot, himself, [? ?] attached to his wife, certainly as such as one of his cold and [?] nature could be, and he had used every effort short of a positive refusal to prevent his wife accompanying the party. Perhaps, even then, he had [a presentment?] of the future, although he had no fixed plan except that he

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intended to lose no opportunity of advancing himself in the [counsels?] of the [paramount?] party.

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It is unnecessary, and indeed it would be impossible, for me to even attempt to portray the terrible conditions existing in France generally and in Paris especially at this time. The trade of the informer and the spy was universal and [? ?] the unfortunate even suspected of being an aristocrat let alone one who was known to belong to that persecuted class.

After only a short deliberation, Bigot decided to sell his master and his wife and child to the authorities. This he did and they were arrested about one week after their arrival and taken to prison. De [Aragnae?] and his wife were at once condemned to the guillotine. The child was delivered to Bigot's wife upon her promise to take it away for Paris at once. The news of the fate of her master and mistress had the most dreadful effect upon Bigot's wife and she passed from one terrible attack of hysteria to another. Finally she became [quieted?] sufficiently to be removed upon Bigot's promise to take her and the Count's child back to Brittany.

After their arrival, Bigot, in his rage at not being able to profit by his unspeakable treachery, said enough for his wife to understand that the Count and his wife had met their death through his act. She went into violent convulsions and, in a lucid [?] just before her death, she cursed Bigot and his [decendants?] for all time. In the midst of this catastrophe and when it became evident that she must die, premature child-birth was indicated and the complications were such that the attending physician decided to perform the "[Ceasarean?]" operation. During this the mother died and the child was born. It was a boy, perfect physically, except that it had a triangular birthmark below the lobe of its left ear, the shape being 9 exactly the same as the knife of the guillotine.

[Hendered?] desperate by his well-deserved misfortune, Bigot arranged for the care of the little De [Aragnae?] child with one of his peasant neighbors and in whose care he also

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placed his own boy. He enlisted in the army and was killed at the Battle of the Pyramids. The fate of the De [Aragnae?] child is unknown. Little Paul Bigot II developed into a strong, [active?] boy of violent passions and headstrong nature. At the age of 17 he ran off to sea and finally found his natural element as a member of Jean Lafitte's pirate crew. As outlined already, he finally drifted to St. Joe. One day, about three years after he came to St. Joe, in [stepping?] out of his boat he got into quicksand and perished miserably and alone. Paul Bigot III, his son and the father of our historian, was stabbed to death by a drunken Seminole Indian in a tavern [brawl?] in St. Joe.

[Moving?] the family history, our Paul made up his mind to do everything possible to avoid the [?] of the family curse and to such good effect that he had reached the good old age of eighty-four years. The curse, however, did not stop at him. Paul Bigot IV was killed by the bite of a rattlesnake. In turn, his son, Paul Bigot V, died at San Juan Hill in Cuba, and his son, in turn, Paul Bigot VI, gave up his life at Chateau-Thierry during the World War.

Thus it was that the curse had never failed in any generation except in the case of the Paul Bigot [???]. Not only had violent death pursued this unfortunate family but the oldest son in each generation had borne the scarlet guillotine-shaped birthmark.

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Our interest in his tale had evidently given old Paul a kindly feeling for us and we could not get away from him. The next night we went to take the 7 p.m. train for [?] and Paul went with us to the depot. [As?] stood around waiting for train [time?] and Paul went across the street for some cigarettes. Just as he came back an automobile ran over him, killing him instantly.

I do not attempt to explain the whys or the [wherefores?] of this narrative, but all of it happened.